

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 05530 220318Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 211610Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9488

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 5530

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CGEN, CVIS, UR, US

SUBJECT: VISAS FOR SOVIETS IN SAN FRANCISCO

REF: A. MOSCOW 3868 B. STATE 88505 C. STATE 81077

1. DURING DISCUSSION WITH KORNIYENKO APRIL 18 HE RAISED WITH ME IN A VERY ADAMANT AND INDIGNANT MANNER PROBLEM OF PENDING VISAS FOR SOVIETS ASSIGNED TO SAN FRANCISCO CONSULATE GENERAL. (HE HAD PREVIOUSLY RAISED THIS SUBJECT WITH ME, AS DID KOMPLEKTOV WITH MATLOCK, ON MARCH 20, AS REPORTED REFTEL A). TWO MEMBERS OF SOVIET STAFF, ZAMYATIN AND LAKHTARIN, WHO APPLIED FOR VISAS THREE WEEKS AGO ARE STILL AWAITING A RESPONSE, HE SAID. IF EVERY VISA REQUEST BOILS DOWN TO A QUESTION OF COUNTING THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE ASSIGNED TO THE CONSULATE GENERAL, KORNIYENKO SAID, THEN IT COULD LEAD TO AN UNPLEASANT SITUATION. THE U.S. SIDE, HE POINTED OUT, EMPLOYS MANY MORE PEOPLE IN THE USSR THAN THE SOVIET SIDE DOES IN THE U.S., IF ONE TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION THE MANY SOVIET EMPLOYEES ON THE STAFF OF BOTH THE EMBASSY IN MOSCOW AND THE CONSULATE GENERAL IN LENINGRAD.

2. THE USSR, KORNIYENKO CONTINUEUD, HAS NEVER AGREED TO A SPECIFIC NUMERICAL LIMITATION ON ITS STAFF IN THE UNITED STATES. IF SITUATION DEVELOPS WHICH COULD LEAD TO A "VISA WAR," THEN SOVIET SIDE COULD EASILY ARRANGE IT SO THAT LOCAL EMPLOYEES ARE NO LONGER AVAILABLE TO U.S. ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE USSR. SERVANTS COULD ALSO BE INCLUDED IN THIS CATEGORY, HE SAID.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 05530 220318Z

3. I ANSWERED FIRMLY THAT IF SUCH A SITUATION DEVELOPS, BOTH SIDES WOULD BE THE LOSERS. MY STRONG ADVICE TO KORNIYENKO WAS THAT HE NOT GO DOWN THAT PARTICULAR ROAD.

4. KORNIYENKO REPLIED THAT THERE HAD NEVER BEEN AGREEMENT TO "QUOTA": THE SOVIETS NEVER ACCEPTED IT. KORNIYENKO ADDED THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO THREATEN ANYTHING UNPLEASANT, BUT HE HOPED THAT WE WOULD NOT ENGAGE IN THE SORT OF COUNTING WHICH WOULD NOT BE PRODUCTIVE. SOVIET SIDE, HE SAID, HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL TO U.S. IN VARIOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS, HAS NEVER HELD UP VISAS FOR EMBASSY OR CONSULATE GENERAL EMPLOYEES, AND HAS PROVIDED US ADDITIONAL TELEX FACILITIES IN BOTH LENINGRAD AND MOSCOW.

5. I POINTED OUT THAT THERE ARE MANY MORE SOVIETS WORKING IN THE U.S. THAN THERE ARE U.S. EMPLOYEES IN THE SOVIET UNION AND REPEATED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL TO EITHER SIDE TO ALTER THE PRESENT SYSTEM. WE HAVE OPERATED UNDER CURRENT GROUND RULES FOR QUITE SOME TIME AND IT WOULD BE BETTER TO LEAVE THINGS AS THEY CURRENTLY ARE, I SAID. I TOLD KORNIYENKO THAT WE WOULD LOOK INTO THE SPECIFIC VISA REQUESTS HE HAD MENTIONED AND WOULD ADVISE HIM.

6. COMMENT: WE CONSIDER THE FORMULA ESTABLISHED BY DEPARTMENT IN 1972 TO BE EQUITABLE AND IMPORTANT TO PRESERVE, BOTH IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN PRESSURE ON SOVIETS TO KEEP PERMANENT STAFF IN U.S. WITHIN REASONABLE BOUNDS (THUS LIMITING DEGREE TO WHICH THEY CAN BUILD UP LARGE INTELLIGENCE PRESENCE) AND ALSO TO PROVIDE LEVERAGE TO OBTAIN NEEDED FACILITIES FOR US INSTALLATIONS IN USSR. IN CHALLENGING THE FORMULA IN RESPECT TO SAN FRANCISCO, THE SOVIETS PROBABLY HAVE NEW YORK IN MIND AS MUCH AS SAN FRANCISCO. THE FACT CITED REPEATEDLY BY KORNIYENKO THAT SOVIETS HAVE NOT AGREED TO FORMULA IS IRRELEVANT, SINCE PRESUMABLY USG IS NOT REQUIRED TO BASE ITS VISA ISSUANCE POLICY ON BILATERAL AGREEMENT.

7. EMBASSY WOULD FAVOR A RESPONSE ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES TO KORNIYENKO'S DEMARCHE:

A. THE FORMULA SET FORTH BY THE DEPARTMENT IN 1972 REGARDING ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE STAFFING OF OUR RESPECTIVE CONSULATES GENERAL IN LENINGRAD AND SAN FRANCISCO REMAINS THE POLICY OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. WE HAVE NEVER ASSERTED THAT THIS POLICY REPRESENTED A CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 05530 220318Z

BILATERAL AGREEMENT, BUT HAVE ATTEMPTED TO ADVISE THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT OF OUR POLICY IN THIS AREA TO AVOID MISUNDERSTANDINGS. WE ARE, OF COURSE, ALWAYS PREPARED TO DISCUSS CONCRETE QUESTIONS WHICH MAY ARISE IN IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY, AND ARE PREPARED TO MAKE REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS TO ACCOMMODATE SPECIFIC SOVIET NEEDS.

B. AS REGARDS THE TWO VISA APPLICATIONS WHICH HE CITED, WE WOULD NOTE THAT OUR POLICY ANTICIPATES A BALANCE OF OFFICER AND TECHNICAL-

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFFS. WE ARE PREPARED TO COMPARE DATA ON THE NUMBER OF PERSONS ASSIGNED TO EACH OF OUR CONSULAR OFFICES BY CATEGORY, AND IF IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT THE ADDITION OF THESE TWO PERSONS WOULD NOT SUBSTANTIALLY VIOLATE THIS BALANCE, VISAS WILL BE AUTHORIZED. (FYI: IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE ORIGINAL FORMULA PRESENTED HAD SOME FLEXIBILITY, IN THAT IT DID NOT REQUIRE ABSOLUTE NUMERICAL PARITY OF OFFICERS AND STAFF. WE WOULD NOT BE GREATLY DISTURBED BY AN IMBALANCE TO TWO OR THREE, SO LONG AS THE BASIC, GENERAL PRINCIPLE IS PRESERVED.)

C. WE WOULD NOTE THAT, IN ALLOWING THE SOVIET CONSULATE GENERAL IN SAN FRANCISCO A SERVICE STAFF EQUIVALENT TO 50 PERCENT OF THE OFFICER AND TECHNICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF, WE DID SO ON THE EXPRESS ASSUMPTION THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WOULD FACILITATE THE HIRING OF SOVIET CITIZENS TO WORK IN SERVICE CAPACITIES FOR THE AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL IN LENINGRAD. WE HAVE NO OBJECTION, OF COURSE, TO THE SOVIET CONSULATE GENERAL HIRING AS MANY US CITIZENS TO WORK IN SERVICE CAPACITIES AS IT WISHES.

D. IN REGARD TO OUR POSITION REGARDING THE STAFFING OF FUTURE SOVIET INSTALLATIONS IN THE US, SUCH AS THE CONSULATE GENERAL IN NEW YORK, WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE FORMULA PROVIDED FOR SAN FRANCISCO AND LENINGRAD MIGHT NOT BE APPROPRIATE IN ALL DETAILS. IF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WISHES TO DISCUSS ITS PLANS FOR STAFFING THE CONSULATE GENERAL IN NEW YORK, WE WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO TAKE THEIR NEEDS INTO ACCOUNT IN ESTABLISHING A POLICY.

8. FROM THE VEHEMENCE WITH WHICH KORNIYENKO EXPRESSED HIMSELF ON THIS SUBJECT, WHICH BOTH HE AND KOMPLEKTOV HAVE RAISED PREVIOUSLY, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE SOVIETS INTEND TO PURSUE THE MATTER FURTHER IF THEY DO NOT OBTAIN WHAT THEY CONSIDER A SATISFACTORY RESPONSE, AND THEY MAY GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO RETALIATORY MOVES. WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE PRUDENT TO REVIEW OUR CURRENT POLICY  
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 MOSCOW 05530 220318Z

AND EITHER HAVE IT CONFIRMED AT HIGH LEVEL, OR ELSE ALTER IT NOW IN ADVANCE OF A POSSIBLE CONFRONTATION ON THE ISSUE.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Draft Date:** 21 APR 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** MorefiRH  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** 75 MOSCOW 3868, 75 STATE 88505, 75 STATE 81077  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** MorefiRH  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 24 JUN 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** WITHDRAWN <10 Jun 2003 by MorefiRH, INA>; RELEASED <24 JUN 2003 by MorefiRH>; APPROVED <24 JUN 2003 by MorefiRH>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
05 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** VISAS FOR SOVIETS IN SAN FRANCISCO  
**TAGS:** PFOR, CGEN, CVIS, UR, US  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006